

short of extinction is a priority 2 task. All other actions necessary to provide for full recovery of listed species are priority 3 tasks.

NMFS has modified the priorities assigned to certain recovery tasks in the Implementation Schedule to better reflect NMFS guidance on priority rankings (55 FR 24296). These changes resulted in downgrading from priority 1 to 2 the following recovery tasks: 1.2B, 1.2C, 1.3A, 2.2C, 2.3A, 2.4A, 2.4B, 2.4E, and 2.4F. Recovery task 1.1D was changed from priority 1 to priority 3, and tasks 2.6A, 2.6B, and 3.1H were changed from priority 2 to priority 3. In many cases, the above changes were made in recognition that there is insufficient information available for many shortnose sturgeon populations to determine which factors may be limiting recovery and threatening the survival of specific populations. As new information becomes available, priority rankings for recovery tasks may warrant additional changes.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531–1543 *et seq.*

Dated: December 10, 1998.

Rolland A. Schmitten,

*Assistant Administrator for Fisheries,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 120798B]

Marine Mammals; File No. 259–1481

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Ronald J. Schusterman, Long Marine Laboratory, University of California Santa Cruz, 100 Shaffer Road, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, has applied in due form for a permit to take California sea lions (*Zalophus californianus*), harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*), for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before January 19, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS,

1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713–2289); and

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802–4213 (562/980–4001).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this application should be mailed to the Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713–0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or by other electronic media.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Shapiro or Ruth Johnson, 301/713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant seeks authorization to continue studies on pinniped bioacoustics cognition using captive animals trained to participate in behavioral experiments. The acoustic experiments will use pure-tone detection and discrimination tasks and the cognitive studies will involve visual, auditory and cross-modal matching-to-sample tasks.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: December 11, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

*Chief, Permits and Documentation Division,
Office of Protected Resources, National
Marine Fisheries Service.*

[FR Doc. 98–33468 Filed 12–16–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Chicago Mercantile Exchange: Proposed Amendments to the Cash Settlement Provisions of the CME Brazilian Real Futures Contract

AGENCY: Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

ACTION: Notice of availability of proposed amendments to the terms and conditions of commodity futures contract.

SUMMARY: The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME or Exchange) has submitted proposed amendments related to the cash settlement provisions of its Brazilian Real futures contract. Under the proposal, the CME proposes to adopt procedures to set an alternative cash settlement price in the event the Central Bank of Brazil does not determine and/or the SISBACEN does not disseminate the official average offer rate of Brazilian reais per U.S. dollar on the last day of trading. That alternative cash settlement price would be based on the results of the CME survey of financial institutions inside of Brazil who are active in the Brazilian reais per commercial U.S. dollar spot and/or non-deliverable forward (NDF) markets. The Acting Director of the Division of Economic Analysis (Division) of the Commission, acting pursuant to the authority delegated by Commission Regulation 140.96, has determined that publication of the proposals for comment is in the public interest, will assist the Commission in considering the views of interested persons, and is consistent with the purpose of the Commodity Exchange Act.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before January 4, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons should submit their views and comments to Jean A. Webb, Secretary, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Three Lafayette Centre, 1155 21st Street, NW Washington, DC 20581. In addition, comments may be sent by facsimile transmission to facsimile number (202) 418–5521, or by electronic mail to secretary@cftc.gov. Reference should be made to the amendments to the CME Brazilian Real futures contract.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Please contact Thomas Leahy of the Division of Economic Analysis, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, Three Lafayette Centre, 1155 21st Street NW, Washington, 20581, telephone (202) 418–5278. Facsimile number: (202) 418–5527. Electronic mail: tleahy@cftc.gov.